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NRO and USAF review(s) completed.

Approved For Release 2004/12/15 : CIA-RDP74J00828R000100200024-3

Given the continuing decline in usefulness, should the total U-2 fleet of twelve aircraft be reduced to eight by mothballing four U-2R's, and consolidated into a single SAC fleet with FY 1971 savings of approximately [] in CIA [] and NRP [] funds?

Discussion:

The US Government presently possesses two separate U-2 reconnaissance aircraft fleets: a covert CIA capability (IDEALIST) and a non-covert Strategic Air Command (SAC) unit.

The SAC and CIA U-2R aircraft are essentially identical. It was intended that they be interchangeable in case a special need arose or one fleet suffered more attrition than the other. The same main camera is used (IRIS II).

The SAC U-2C/R fleet has been considerably more active on useful missions than the CIA fleet:

	<u>Operational Flying Hours</u>	
	<u>SAC Fleet</u>	<u>CIA Fleet</u>
FY 1968	3,947	75
FY 1969	4,736	69
FY 70 Forecast	3,380	336

The SAC fleet has been used over South East Asia (particularly Laos) and Cuba. Even these missions will decline in the future because of appropriate re-examination of dated requirements and the availability of other aircraft platforms such as SR-71s and tactical reconnaissance aircraft for Laotian coverage. The prime mission of the CIA fleet has been out of []

Since May, 1968, a policy constraint has been imposed limiting the U-2 to peripheral flights no closer than 20NM off the Chinese mainland. Flying under such restraints, the resolution of the photography (taken at oblique angles up to 70°) degrades so much (to worse than 5'-6') because of haze. []

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-EXO/OSA
B+FD/OSA

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Even though it has been operated 20NM offshore, Chinese Communist reaction has been hostile. On May 7, 1969, a MIG-21 chased the U-2 at a point 48 miles off the China Coast. Another such incident occurred on October 16, 1969. The satellite, unlike even the peripheral flights, does not provoke a hostile reaction. The predictable mission profile up and down the coast makes the IDEALIST an easier target than it would be on a direct penetration, according to the program office.

In 1968, only nine missions were flown out of [redacted] In 1969, to date, about seven have been planned. More than eight have been cancelled.

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In a dense air defense environment such as the U.S.S.R., N. Vietnam, N. Korea, and portions of China, the U-2R is significantly vulnerable to unknown SA-2 sites. By avoiding known SA-2 sites to reduce vulnerability, the mission may also thereby miss or degrade its resolution against prime targets often protected by SA-2 sites.

Some U-2R's could have economical potential use as airborne platform alternative to satellites for earth resources sensing. Such a use of these aircraft would involve a transfer of the assets to the NASA budget.

In Summary, the separate IDEALIST fleet (costing [redacted] in CIA cost, including 150 agency personnel), should be terminated because:

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- demonstrated pattern of declining use and utility of the CIA U-2R fleet;
- availability of more advanced and less vulnerable manned aircraft reconnaissance platforms (SAC SR-71's);
- SAC will still retain a U-2 capability which will be adequate for present and anticipated requirements;

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- policy limitations prohibiting use of U-2's in overflights of denied areas and consequent low utilization;
- availability of satellite photographic and [redacted] reconnaissance systems;
- CIA can assign civilian pilots to the SAC U-2 unit to maintain proficiency in the event that a civilian U-2 pilot is required for a specific mission.

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Presumably, since the total fleet would be reduced, minimum additional facilities for storage and maintenance would be needed for the two additional active aircraft in the SAC fleet. In previous years, cost estimates of consolidation have included one-time hanger construction costs to maintain an undiminished total fleet. If the total fleet was reduced from 12 to 8, (4 mothballed or transferred to NASA) then presumably the "one-time" initial fiscal year costs would not exceed the "savings" expected.

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TRANSMITTAL SLIP		DATE 24 November 1969
TO: Gen. Ross/D/OSA		
ROOM NO.	BUILDING Tyler	
REMARKS:		
<p>The attached excerpts from a Bureau of the Budget paper are forwarded for your information.</p> <p>Mr. Duckett does not want a big argument on this, but if you desire to submit something, please let me have it soonest.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 150px; height: 50px; margin: 10px auto;"></div>		
FROM: Compt/DD/S&T		
ROOM NO. 6E68	BUILDING Hqs.	

FORM NO. 241
1 FEB 55

REPLACES FORM 36-8
WHICH MAY BE USED.

(47)

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23/Nov*

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handy*

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